THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) Government have seen reports in the media that some countries seek to restrict the visit of Indian scientists to those countries. There have been instances where such restrictions Were imposed on India scientists. Only Canada has sent written instructions to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that in light of India's testing of nuclear explosive devices, the Government of Canada would not welcome participation of nuclear experts from India in meetings in Canada until further notice. A few other countries have informally conveyed similar views or delayed visas to Indian scientists, Government is keeping a watch on developments in this regard.

Consulates opened by India and China

2514. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Consulates and Sub-consulates opened by the People's Republic of China in our country;

(b) the number of Consulates and Sub-consulates opened by the Government of India in China; and

(c) whether a periodic review is under-taken of the nature of work performed by these cosular offices and whether any change is contemplated in their location and activities in consultation with the Government of the~People's Republic of China?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) China has a Consulate in Mumbai.

(b) India has a Consulate in Shanghai in China. We continue to maintain our Consulate General in Hong Kong after assumption of sovereignty over Hong Kong by China on July 1, 1997.

(c) A periodic review is done of the work performed by our Consulates. At present there is no proposal under consideration for relocation.

"Most Favoured Nation" status to Pakistan

2515. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has granted 'Most Favoured Nation' status to Pakistan;

(b) if so, whether Pakistan has also reciprocated;

(c) if not, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(d) what steps Government have taken to urge Pakistan to fulfil WTO obligations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (d) In accordance with its obligations under the WTO, and earlier as a signatory to GATT, India extended MFN status to Pakistan.

On the other hand Pakistan, in spite of its membership of the WTO, and earlier of GATT, has not accorded MFN status to India. Government have officially on several occasions urged Pakistan to fulfil its obligations under the WTO and extend MFN status to India. It has regrettably not done so.

Ministers of Pakistan Government have from time to time linked the grant to MFN status to India to extraneous issues.

We will continue to urge Pakistan to fulfil its obligations.

Offer of unilateral disarmament

2516. SHRI VAYLAR RAVI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has offered unilateral disarmament of the nation;

(b) if so, what are the compulsions for making such an offer; and

(c) what is the reaction of Pakistan to this Offer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

भारत के परमाणु मुद्दे पर अमरीका का दृष्टिकोण

2517.**श्री ईश दत्त यादव**:

श्री रामगोपाल यादव:

क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या उन्होंने अपने किसी दूत के माध्यम से अमरीकी विदेशी उपमंत्री से परमाणु मुद्दे पर कोई बातचीत की है;

(ख) यदि हां,तो बातचीत का ब्यौरा क्या है और उससे अमरीका का रूस कैसा रहा;और

(ग) बातचीत के दौरान अमरीकी रूख पर भारत की क्या प्रतिक्रिया हैं?

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्रीमती वसुन्धरा राजे): (क) और (ख) प्रधान मंत्री के विशेष दूत श्री जसवंत सिंह ने अप्रसार तथा निरस्त्रीकरण एंव अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा स्थिति भारत एंव संयुक्त राज्य के आपसी हितों से संबंधित विभिन्न मसलों पर रचनात्मक चर्चा की हैं।

(ग) जिस मुक्त और सौहार्दपूर्ण वातावरण में दोनों पक्षों ने अपने विचारों का आदान-प्रदान किया तथा दोनों देश अपनी वार्ता जारी रखने के लिए सहमत हो गये हैं,सरकार उसका स्वागत करती हैं। यह आपसी हित के सभी मसलों पर संयुक्त राज्य के साथ रचनात्मक वार्ता में शामिल होने की भारत की वचनबद्वता के अनुरूप हैं।

Applications for Passports in Kerala

2518. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the passport offices in Kerala received large number of applications for passports;

(b) if so, the total applications received during the last three years in Calicut, Cochin and Trivandrum;

(c) whether any change has been made in the rules for issuing passports; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Total applications received in the last three years in Calicut, Cochin and Trivandrum is given below:

	1995	1996	1997
Calicut	133067	140574	148055
Cochin	80686	84710	105615
Trivandrum	90432	77106	92522

(c) and (d) The Passport Rules 1980 have not been formally amended in the recent past. Administrative procedures for issue of passports however have been streamlined. Some of the steps taken in this regard include application forms to be made available free of charge, acceptance of self-attested copies of supporting documents, expansion of list of officers authorised to Sign Verification Certificate, fixing of time limit for police verification, automatic reissue of passport after final expiry, issue of twenty year passport in addition to ten year passport, issue of sixty page jumbo passport booklet for frequent travellers, issue of passport on out-of-turn basis in specified emergencies etc.

Marketing infrastructure for handling bumper crop of apples

2519. DR ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to newsitem which appeared in the Indian Express, dated 18th June, 1998 captioned "the problem of plenty" relating to bumper harvest of apples;

(b) if so, the steps being initiated to liaise with the food processing industry in the country to take timely advantage of the bumper crop; and